

CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE HABITAT RELATIONSHIPS SYSTEM
maintained by the
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
and supported by the
CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY WILDLIFE TASK GROUP
Database Version 8.1 (2005)

B309 Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*
Family: Tyrannidae Order: Passeriformes Class: Aves

Written by: D. Gaines
Reviewed by: L. Mewaldt
Edited by: R. Duke
Updated by: CWHR Program Staff, July 2005

DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Uncommon to common, summer resident in a wide variety of forest and woodland habitats below 2800 m (9000 ft) throughout California exclusive of the deserts, the Central Valley, and other lowland valleys and basins. Preferred nesting habitats include mixed conifer, montane hardwood-conifer, Douglas-fir, redwood, red fir, and lodgepole pine (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Sallies out for flying insects over forest canopy or adjacent meadows, clearings, or shrub-covered slopes in wide-ranging flights from high, conspicuous perches. Favors honey bees (Bent 1942).

Cover: Requires large, tall trees, usually conifers, for nesting and roosting sites; also lofty perches, typically the dead tips or uppermost branches of the tallest trees in vicinity, for singing posts and hunting perches.

Reproduction: Nest an open cup of grasses, mosses, lichens, rootlets, pine needles; usually placed in a conifer 2-20 m (5-70 ft) above ground, well out on a horizontal limb (Bent 1942).

Water: No specific information found, but nest usually close to water source.

Pattern: Most numerous in montane conifer forests where tall trees overlook canyons, meadows, lakes or other open terrain. Extent and density of forest habitat less important than the amount of air space that can be scanned from its highest perches (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Gaines 1977b).

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Yearlong, diurnal activity.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Arrives from South American wintering areas mid-April (southern California) to early May (northern California). Transients still moving north in early June. Departs breeding areas in August; most have left the state by early October. Accidental in winter in southern California (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

Home Range: In breeding season, probably equal to territory. In Sierra Nevada eastside pine forest, Bock and Lynch (1970) estimated home range to be 45 ha (111 ac).

Territory: In Virginia, Johnston (1971) found a mean territory of 8 ha (20 ac).

Reproduction: Monogamous; peak of egg-laying in June. Clutch averages 3 eggs (range 3-4); probably single-brooded. Incubation about 14 days. Both sexes care for altricial young. Fledging occurs at 15-19 days (Bent 1942, Harrison 1978).

Niche: Detailed life history information apparently lacking.

REFERENCES

- Bent, A. C. 1942. Life histories of North American flycatchers, larks, swallows, and their allies. U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 179. 555pp.
- Bock, C. E., and J. F. Lynch. 1970. Breeding bird populations of burned and unburned conifer forests in the Sierra Nevada. *Condor* 72:182-189.
- Gaines, D. 1977b. Birds of the Yosemite Sierra. California Syllabus, Oakland. 153pp.
- Garrett, K., and J. Dunn. 1981. Birds of southern California. Los Angeles Audubon Soc. 408pp.
- Grinnell, J., and A. H. Miller. 1944. The distribution of the birds of California. Pac. Coast Avifauna No. 27. 608pp.
- Harrison, C. 1978. A field guide to the nests, eggs and nestlings of north American birds. W. Collins Sons and Co., Cleveland, OH. 416pp.
- Harrison, C. J. O., ed. 1978. Bird families of the world. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York. 264pp.
- Johnston, D. W. 1971. Niche relationships among some deciduous forest flycatchers. *Auk* 88:796-804. northeastern Oregon. *J. For.* 75:335-337.